As it becomes increasingly common for health professionals to engage with their patients via new technology such as mobile phones and iPads, it is worth asking what happens when they leave the patient room. If physicians are able to carry around technology that supplies a wealth of patient information at their fingertips, shouldn’t hospitals make these luxuries available to patients as well?

What if the patient has additional questions and the nurse is unavailable due to administrative workloads or a high patient volume? It is here that the implementation of in-room healthcare information technology can enhance patients’ engagement in their care, advance the reputation of hospitals and improve the quality of care.

The concept of patient-centered care in the hospital environment has evolved from administering medical or surgical care to the disposition of the treatment of patients and families alike. Unfortunately, during most hospital visits, patients and families don’t always feel like they are “in the know” about the care that they are there to receive. Many times, the patient is the last to know much of the information. However, the increased implementation of personalized technology is changing the course of healthcare as we know it, and most importantly, improving the in-room patient experience.

Healthcare technology has advanced to such an extent that simply offering WiFi in hospital rooms is seen as a necessity rather than a luxury. The next step in utilizing technology is by providing patient-centered technology such as personal interactive television that conforms to each patient’s specific needs. In-room technology is now providing a means to improve the experience of the patients and their families; resulting in improved patient satisfaction. These technologies provide online information and video education; providing the patient with the opportunity to learn about their treatment, diagnoses and/or procedures. Video education improves the recovery process while also helping these patients follow their care...
plan post discharge and keeping them from returning to the hospital. Beyond the clinical benefits; these types of solutions also cater to the "hospitality" experience. They offer high definition movies, television guides and relaxation options to allow the patient's mind to escape from the fact that they are in the hospital. Hospitals need technology such as this that is designed with the patient in mind, for the patient to use.

Multiple hospitals in Georgia have already begun steps to improve patient satisfaction through various means, but one common trend is creating a patient room design that gives the patient and their families a new and improved experience. Patient-centered technology is equally important and should be considered early in the planning process for new construction and/or major renovation plans.

The adoption of healthcare technology is just the start of information exchange, and the need for patient-centered technology is now greater than ever. By minimizing discomfort and providing more opportunities to inform and educate patients and families about their specific condition and treatment options, the healing process is accelerated. Therefore, not only can health IT improve recovery, but interactive patient care brings hospitality to the hospital setting by providing patients with the comforts of home.

To learn more contact Kathy Dardeen, RHIA, Vice President of Sales at Aceso, Kathy.Dardeen@aceso.com